

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A relay provides message filtering services to an e-mail network. The relay monitors incoming communication and intercepts e-mail messages. The relay applies a policy to received messages to determine whether a message should be delayed. The relay applies a policy to delayed messages by reference to a delayed processing event which triggers the delayed processing. The relay updates policy data in accordance by employing an update module. The relay then restricts the delivery of messages having attributes close to those of harmful data as provided by a policy database.